

Fall 1989

The Carroll Quarterly, Fall 1989

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Fall 1989

A complex collage featuring a large image of a building, a dinosaur head, a map, and various text elements including "ORIGINAL Formula", "JOANNIS CARROLL", "a day helps you rest & play", and "Fall 1989".

Cover art by Katherine King

Thanks

Poetry is praying with images,
stick-figures of words.
Williams' machine made demi-god.

My god poets are nothing
without borrowing
what you offer.

Alfred Cahen

carroll quarterly

Fall 1989

The Carroll Quarterly is a literary magazine produced by an undergraduate staff. Submissions should follow conventional manuscript form, and include a short biographical note. Address all correspondence to:

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contents

Thanks	1	Alfred Cahen
Late Night Journeys	5	Michael J. Newman
Prince of the Birch Trees	6	Bernard Chapin
Monet in the Basement	7	James R. Pipik
Focal Point	10	Sally Joranko
Untitled	12	Ted Triska
images of anguish	13	Jeanne Poduska
Singer of the Source,		
The African Violet	14	James Magner, Jr.
The Anvil	15	George Kanieski
Empty Stages	16	Joanne Zullo
Untitled	17	Jerry Bjelopera
Dust of History	18	James Magner, Jr.
A Yellowed Homily	20	Bernard Chapin
Mr. Blue	22	Kip Zegers
slumber boys	23	Jeanne Poduska
Untitled	24	Ted Triska
Midnight Roads	25	George Kanieski
Prescription	28	Michael Cocchiarale
Memorial	29	Kip Zegers
Untitled	30	Ted Triska
To A Chinaman, In A Hole,		
Long Ago	31	James Magner, Jr.
From Sea to Sea	32	Bernard Chapin
Untitled	33	Ted Triska
Windows	34	Mark Winegardner
Untitled	39	Joe Martines

On Receiving a Letter From a Young Friend	40	Alfred Cahen
I Hear a Horn Now	41	James Magner, Jr.
Conditional	42	Michael Cocchiarale
State of the Art	43	Patricia Stuart
(S)He Is (S)He	44	Joe Compton
The Dangerous Practice of Augury	46	Jeanne Poduska
Untitled	47	Ted Triska
The Timbre of the Dew	48	George Kanieski
Bobo	49	Jean Marie Dillon
The Years Left Behind	50	Roberta Bokman

Late Night Journeys

I love to read late at night,
When all the world seems to me
To be a dark street,
Lined with mysterious and inviting alleyways,
And I, its solitary traveler.

The still and serene night air is
Best for these mental journeys,
Its quiet calm the best device
For focusing my pin-drop delicate thoughts,
As I travel down whichever alleyway I choose,
Led by my book and the night,
Confined only by the limits of my human mind.

Michael J. Newman

Prince of the Birch Trees

Back in middle school
I used to read adventure books about
Robert Bruce and Walter Raleigh
which I turned over last week while looking for coins
yet I didn't recall the dimensions of those men
what I really see is a granite black covering
atop our house
where bees and sun and I used to roam those summer days
as I first became historian
-- stretched out like a hide
skimming over words of legend
assessing validity
as I was First Seer of Reality.

Seer of oak leaves
ash stumps
and grass infected culverts
Land that could be held
apart from imagination.
Heroes fought for countries
but I conquered for memory
dearer than Elizabeth's collars
-- moss for its ruffles
shingle for castle stone
dew like sea's spray.

Armies were trapped in glue bindings
but a boy with a ladder could survey the world.
Most lessons now forgotten
as gloss from their pages,
but my kingdom is intact to me
more vivid than any feat of Francis Drake
or drowning of Spanish sailors.

Monet in the Basement

We were halfway through the bottle of wine when I finished telling the story of the summer I had gone to six weddings in six weeks picking up six girls and utterly failing to score with any of them. Actually it had been four weddings, ten weeks, and two girls, one of whom I dated for several months the next winter, but the exaggerated version made for a better story and put me one up in our mildly inebriated match of can-you-top-this-romantic-anecdote. My tale ended with a fictional wrestling match in the back seat of a car parked at the botanical gardens by the art museum. This reminded her of something. She finished her glass of wine and sat back.

It was in the modern room on the second floor, *she said*. I was looking at one of Monet's "Water Lilly" things, you know the one they have there. It's very hard to look at. For one thing, it's too big for the room. You can never see the whole thing at one time, and that's what the whole impressionist thing is supposed to be about, isn't it? So I'm backing up, right out of the room, and suddenly this voice just behind me says in that library whisper that people use in museums, "Monet, right?"

I half turn to look at this guy sort of sideways, measuring him up. He's heavyish, maybe late twenties or early thirties, thick red-brown beard, and these little round bifocals. He's not looking at me, he's just staring past me at the "Water Lilies" with this strange look of intensity, like he's trying to size it up. I figure he's not trying to pick me up or anything. No, really, lots of guys cruise museums. They do pretty good sometimes. You should try it. Anyway, I decided I'd talk to him. I say, "Yes, it's one of a series."

He mumbles something that means he heard me and just stands there looking at it, like it's a puzzle or a riddle or something. Now that's just the way I've always felt about it, so I tell him so. "This painting has always been a bit of a puzzle to me."

Now he looks at me for the first time, as if despite the fact that we've been talking for a couple of minutes, he just noticed me. He says, "What do you mean?"

First I tell him about how, for one thing, it's too big for the room, then I say, "I can never decide just where Monet is when he paints this, or at least where he wants us to be. Are we looking down on the water lillies floating on the water? Or are these reflections in the pond of lillies that are falling down toward the water? Are we looking under the water looking up at the water lilies above us?"

That usually makes people stop for a minute. They look at the painting and tilt their heads and hold their chins and hmmm and huh and then they say something impressively eloquent about ambiguity or phenomenology or some-

thing, and then they try to pick me up and I wish I'd never said anything. I always say that stuff about the puzzle flippantly, "Ha ha, isn't that cute?" but I really mean it, I really wonder about it. It's like that picture of the chess piece that, without moving, suddenly becomes two faces about to kiss. Something in the brain just clicks and suddenly one is the other. And sometimes if you look at it just right, they're both there at once, and the whole thing vibrates in your mind even though it's a still picture. So when some student Romeo turns it into part of a pseudo-intellectual courting ritual, I get so..... Anyway, this guy doesn't even look at the painting. He just stands there with this blank lost look on his face.

I say, "I suppose that sounds kind of strange."

He says, "I don't think so." And he's still looking at me with those tiny empty eyes at the bottom of those thick round lenses, not checking me out, not even seeing me, really. It's like he's thinking so hard that he can't even see and I just happen to be in the direction he was facing when he stopped seeing. Finally he says, "Do you know much about Monet?"

Now, this is more like a pick up line, but still that distant gaze Say, do you have any more of that stuff? *She pushed her glass toward me and I filled it.* Thanks. So I tell him I only know what Art Appreciation FA-101 taught me in college, but I know Monet was an impressionist of the late 18th early 20th et cetera and I start to go on a little, but I can tell he's lost interest. So I stop, and he says, "This doesn't look much like the Monet I've seen."

I say, "This is from his late period near the end of his life. There are earlier works over here." I lead him around the corner where "The Wheat Field" is hanging and the second he sees it his face lights up. He walks, practically runs right up to it, I swear to God for a second I thought he was going to take it right off the wall.

"This is a Monet?" he says.

And I say, "Yes, 1884," or whatever. It's written right there on the plaque but I'm trying to sound authoritative. "Yes, 1884, his blue period," or something like that. I'm making it up, but how's he supposed to know? So I'm going on again, laying it on pretty thick about Monet's style and his life — he led a damn interesting life to hear me tell it.

Then he turns to me and says, "Do you think you could recognize a Monet anywhere?"

I'm a little nervous that he's calling my bluff, so I hedge my bet. "I'm no expert." He looks disappointed, much more than you'd think. Discovering that the girl you met in the museum is not an accomplished art critic is not usually the cause of great remorse, but this looks as if his last hope has been crushed. So I say, "Why do you ask?"

He says, sighing, resigned, weary, "I think I've got one in my basement."

"What? A Monet?" I asked her.

That's what I said: "What? A Monet?"

And he says, "Yeah, I think so." And then with a little prodding he tells this wild story. "A couple of months ago I went to bed at home and woke up three days later in a hospital. The doctor told me I had received a concussion two days before — the day after I went to bed at home — but I couldn't remember anything about it. She said it was fairly common to have partial amnesia after a severe concussion. Everything for hours before or after the concussion can be erased from the memory, totally wiped out. In fact, I was lucky to be alive.

"When the police came, they said the same thing. They told me I'd been in a car accident and that the woman with me had been killed. They wanted to know

who she was. I didn't know. What woman: They showed me photographs of her, but I didn't know her or at least I didn't remember her. As it turned out, no one else knew her either: no identification, no wallet, no credit cards, nothing. Whatever I.D. she might have had was destroyed in the fire. They contacted the missing persons bureaus, the F.B.I., even tried identifying her by dental records, but nothing worked.

"I was no help. I can't remember anything after going to bed that night. I know that sometime during the next day I met a woman, drove somewhere with her, got in an accident, managed to escape the burning wreck with only a concussion while the woman died, but I don't remember any of it."

Isn't that crazy? I mean he's got to wonder about that all the time. Who was she? A hitchhiker? A new-found business associate? A lover? Why did they crash? Was it his fault? Was he trying to kill her, aiming the car at a tree and jumping clear? Or maybe he was covering up, maybe he knew the whole thing and he was just stone-walling the cops with this amnesia bit.

"What's all this got to do with Monet?"

That's what I said: "What's all this got to do with Monet?"

He says, "When I recovered and they let me go home, things went back to normal for a while. Then, about a week ago, I was looking for something in my basement and I came across a painting. I didn't remember where it came from, but I didn't think much about it at the time. You know how that stuff tends to pile up. Last night it occurred to me: that painting could be a clue to what happened the day I got the concussion. I rushed downstairs and looked it over very closely. It looked like that." He pointed at "The Wheat Field." "Not exactly like it, but the same style. And it was signed like this." He pointed at Monet's characteristic signature.

"That's when I remembered this article I read awhile back about this robbery that happened in France about six months ago — a big deal, actually, a daylight robbery of the Louvre with machine guns and hostages and everything — and one of the stolen paintings was a famous Monet, so famous that it will have to be hidden for years, the thieves can't hope to sell it without being caught, not even on the black market. It was a very important painting of its period and students came from all over the world to study it, its brush strokes, its lighting effects. Now this brilliant piece of art, a painting that set the tone for an entire movement, is lost to the world for years, perhaps forever. And I think it's in my basement."

So I suddenly realize: I'm standing here with this guy who may be an accessory to armed robbery, who may be a murderer, and who may have a priceless Monet in his basement, and even he doesn't know if any of it is true or not. Is that crazy or what?

"What happened next?" I asked.

I went out with him, of course. A story like that? I mean, I may not know art, but I know what I like.

James R. Pipik

Focal Point

For Jordan

It's that time of the moon again:
This bloody show, your birthday,
And again the wind trying to move the house.

After, we reckoned 324 pains —
Twelve each hour,
As if agony can be reckoned.
But even had you known, you would have born them
With the same awful courage, the strength
that failed me.

It began that afternoon;
Through sealed windows I saw it, poltergeist
Or mime, shred undulating poplars
And fling the colored bits at an icy sky.

It's resting now,
Filling its lungs to hurl itself against us
In another long, hard, high-pitched shriek,
Then to erelent, subside to a croon
(You sang your labor, I said),
Breathe and wait.

In that room with heavy-lidded windows
I timed pains, all I knew of you
Until the high, thin, reedy cry
Of any newborn, and wrinkled purple hands
Against glass walls of another womb
(Had to help her breathe, they said;
The drug made you hold her back).
Still I didn't know you with that thick,
Vicous remnant of your tether,

Until my voice at the door
Jerked your blind little puppet head towards me
And I thought I had never loved that much

Until in time you got the curse,
Swore you could not,
Would not be me.

Until, your courage all but spent on pain,
"The baby just won't come," he said,
"And you're too tired." My belly cramped. What
Was it like when you were the one in the dark?
You clutched my hand with a cold strength
You must have been putting by all day
But your eyes were deep in grey shadows,
And a muscle pulsed in your cheek.

They say you cried, "Will someone get my mom?"
Looking down, I saw my two masked faces
Mirrored in your eyes. Afraid
Before their clear blue trust, I said
"You've got to breathe for the baby." Obediently
You closed your eyes and breathed the oxygen deep,
Your wide eyes locking mine. "Mom,
I'm going to die." Yes,

You're about to know the real meaning of dying
To yourself, the worst pain of living: loving
Another more than yourself — the pain no courage
Can deaden.

You gasped, your eyes searching mine,
When they lifted her from you;
For a second I had seen her for you, curled in her matrix,
Her body grey as a corpse. Then your eyes
Went opaque, and I saw that you knew.

"She's trying to cry." the doctor soothed;
Someone held her close, already blinking
Against the glare of life. You let go
My hand, and closed her fist in yours.
Tears pooled, and I wiped them,
But "Move, mom," you said,
"So I can see."

Outside the wind soughs
And this painless flow of blood reminds me again,
And of your daughter's eyes — that deep,
Unfathomable dark.



images of anguish

there is a cool hollow
in myself
like a stone held for comfort
it is smooth and hard
repository of all my closeness
and trust
sometimes
I hold it just as a pebble
under my tongue
so my speech will be soft

I have prayed for grace
if it be time
to release you as a bird
in its decision to fly
that delicate a
movement
the branch it first met
springs to support
its release

so dramatic an image:
my head bowed
braid fallen
over one long-
kissed shoulder
a quiet curl
marks my nape
that small target
where you might
sever ourselves
that quick a blow
small sorrow

Jeanne Poduska

Singer of the Source, The African Violet

(In memory of James Kilgore, his daughter and grandson and for his family)

Well, he's gone too,
the Apostle of his Source
(and all), into the
Fire that consumes us
all;
Gone, gone
into the sensuous, radiant
orchestration
of Womanhood,
Gone in his consuming celebration
of Black Motherhood,
the African Violet
of us all;
Gone into the Ground
the loveliness, the dance
from which he came,
Gone into the sensuous
gentle radiance of his voice
that played the bass
of his existence
in that voice;
The Tanzanian Drum
has called him Home;
Home, Home
to Her
for whom he longed
and sung
and looked
in all his stare,
his eyes, his voice
his words;
Gone in the garment of her fire,
Gone Home to the African Violet,
Tanzanian Queen
The Violet Source of us all.

James Magner Jr.

The Anvil

Vulcan fire wakens embered life
From rusted iron shards, burns away
The slag of buried years, roars against
The chill of metal things, and, when
Hammer crashes, dances with flying stars.
Black before the fire glow, the hulking steel waits,
The anvil that will ring and sing
The refiner's power, shaping, annealing
A world from lifeless rock and dirt;
Here with flame and cinders striving
Anvil echoes heart in pound and spark,
The anvil molding shoe and sword,
Rod and nail, link and lock
And enduring the thunder of God creating.

George Kanieski

Empty Stages

Empty stages reflecting art that was,
Illumination of shadows reciting lines no longer
Heard.

Ceasar dying endlessly before eyes that
No longer reign in their animated houses.
Sandbags falling aimlessly with no one to heed their warning.
Curtains yearning to be pulled, squeaking out in vexation
Their cries of pain, of stiff joints, wanting only to stretch
Across the great expanse that was once theirs.

I sit in an audience of nothing, waiting for the final curtain,
Waiting to applaud the final bow, wondering,
Will it be mine?

Joanne Zullo



Dust of History

An excerpt from the novella, "That None Be Lost"

I have in my memory, living now, the frozen Chinamen, McKenna, others for whom I speak, brothers who weave themselves in my dreams, that will not leave me, nightmares of days, of nights, of dawns. I am now remembering Daward and Alonzo. What memory will not retrieve, imagination will supply.

...They had lived in the cold so long — two riflemen of the first platoon of C company — that when they came into a valley about dusk and saw a tiny thatched-roofed hut, they couldn't believe their eyes; they thought it was an illusion. But as they walked further into the corner of the valley, closer to the mirage and then touched its sides, their hopes were fulfilled, their sight confirmed.

So they walked cautiously around the baked clay hut with M-1's at ready, seeing if this was, after all, just an inviting trap. They had not been in a house since they left Japan November 13th. They moved, then, through the open kitchen and hearth that preludes the sleeping rooms of Korean homes. No one there, again. They slid open the light wood and paper doors of the inner room and stood silent and then, almost with as much silence, slid their packs and cartridge belts and bandoleers and entrenching tools off their shoulders and let them drop to the floor with a rattling thud.

"Son of a bitch, a night inside!" Daward gathered branches from the field and built a fire in the earthen oven and cooked their rations in their cans with the care of a continental chef. Alonzo laid out the sleeping bags and then went out into the field to take a piss. As he did so, he noticed that where the hut met the ground, there was a rectangular hole in the middle of its structure and he wondered what it was. It was, Daward said, an opening of a tunnel beneath the floor of the house that the people used to heat the house. They would light the fire at one end of the tunnel and the air would flow beneath the floor and out the other side and warm the house. "Son of a bitch!" Alonzo couldn't believe it. He would sleep in warmth one night before meeting with the platoon on the road across the mountains.

They had been assigned to move through these hills and valleys, between two roads, sixteen miles apart, and see if they could detect any enemy. One way or the other, they were to join the platoon at 1200 hours on route 19 tomorrow. They had made good time, detected nothing, and had found the hut near dusk. Too good to be true. They could kindle a fire in the oven. Light the convection tunnel beneath the house. And sleep calm and warm one night. They were quiet in their

joy and expectancy and ate their rations with thanksgiving. Then, almost as ritual, Alonzo took out his last two cigarettes and each took long drags in silence. Daward turned on the hand radio to contact the platoon to say that they were all right and had contacted no enemy. But the hills were too high and blocked contact. And they laughed remembering the captain, just before they left, trying to contact the second platoon and picking up the Chinese instead. That is why they were here. To see if the Chinese had gotten down and in between the two roads. The road they left and the road they were moving toward and would get to at 1200 hours tomorrow.

Well, no contact. So they hid the emptied ration cans and piled wood at the end of the rectangular tunnel and lit a fire. In their innocence of Korean ways, they did not know that the convection tunnel was built for banked embers and not the fire that blazed as they wriggled into their bags, warm for one last evening.

During the night, Daward felt his back burning — the bricks of the floor were burning from the fire and burning through his sleeping bag. He tried to sit erect in the bag, as if he were, absurdly, a man compelled to nocturnal sit-ups, but fell back from the smoke and almost came erect again and again fell back, never again to rise. Alonzo did not move but slumbered on in smoke and fire and the deepening night.

We found them next dusk, still within their ashen bags, charred clay walls, and ashen dreams of warmth, communing limbs and home.

Brothers, dust of history, to what do we point? From whence do we come and why? Issus, Arbela; Austerlitz, Balaclava; Dresden, Hiroshima? Are we, are you subsumed into life or forever lost except in these words? Where has vanished that unutterable love that beheld a son in cradle and nurtured a daughter with evening lessons? Brothers of light and history. Makers of emporers and dubious idealists, thy song I sing. Thy elegy.

James Magner, Jr.

A Yellowed Homily

The train fires into the afternoon
leaving behind three pilgrims.
Aspens are red and wired as we stop at
a chesnut marker
reading "Parson's Graves: and Here Ends Squalor"
The scrawl is fresh
enforced by faithful or wistful hands each summer
in front of ten shale rows symmetrical in decay
but yours is the clearest
a name hedged in divinity
Virtue blended grey with piety
Devoted to significance you fell in your sleep
like a leftover apple to winter's padded ice
while dreaming of glorification.

Your grandson cannot look
he thinks you have left but does not know how far
Pecking at the nearest tree with his six-year-old fingernails
digging deeper and deeper
chipping with both hands
astray in frustration
in the hopes that someday his mark will remain
and that he will forget this hour
as the tree will forget that boy.

Once on the fortieth year
your daughter told you that she would marry
a man who did not believe
she joined him with indifference
yet your cross stays on the wall

its wood dusted but firm
as she now hoes a gauntlet around your age
dress draping a slope above you
unable to grip or hug
Her pallor is a lantern
a wavering flag tattered by absence
She is hallowed
and unable to touch the ground below
on this noontime and every noontime.

In your wood den
comforted by collected prayers
and a suit that survived the depression
bifocals are ground against dry hands
when the faithful congregate near cut ground
You are engraved within me
but when the chiseler's letters
are the lone document
the air will fog the stone hearth
and like Alexander your shield will become grass
finite with wilting spear.

Those carefully plotted around you
could be warriors or thieves
yet they could fall no farther
all lying at the same depth
chilled by the same frost
covered by the same yellowing gospel
never to thaw behind six feet of earth.

Bernard Chapin

Mr. Blue

The boy is high and dry in third year high school Latin where he remembers Ladies Choice. Beneath his soiled hair, inside his tight olive pants, he'd waited for the skinny freshman to ask him. She had, and he'd circled her waist, her dampening blouse, to draw her closer second by second. There were hundreds of separate seconds in the song "Mr. Blue." As he remembers, he is also tracing her name in magic letters that appear on the side of the thick blue text of Virgil. He remembers standing in her living room in a suit; he had been amazed she had a living room, parents, anything outside the darkness of the dance. He carves her name more deeply blue against the stained white thickness of page ends. He stares and traces at her name, and he is failing Latin, and he stares and traces at her name. The blue water that they swam in, that he'd tasted, cannot be drawn at all.

Kip Zegers

slumber boys

another day of no sun
here in the home of these amazing
slumber boys
briefed in untidy sleep atop
a prickly plaid couch
this one graced with beautiful smile
delights in the oxymoronic dances of naked ladies
(french postcards don't ya know?)
to amazing technicolor tones of sepia
midcentury femmes twirl their shelves
of bust and bottom
upon sudden waking, just the usual
whiskey for breakfast

Jeanne Poduska



Midnight Roads

Early in December a few years ago after coming home for the weekend from my first semester of college, I felt itchy, needed to get out. I was bored, had to see what was going on outside. I managed to get my Dad's car, although I felt somewhat ungrateful about running out after only coming home that afternoon. So I said I'd be home before midnight just to salve my conscience and stop his questions.

Money was tight as usual, and I decided on the cheap route and stopped at the restaurant where I had worked the previous summer. I sat at the bar with a Winston and a Coke since I was still eighteen at the time. I maintained this level of excitement for about twenty minutes when Bill, dressed in his busboy black and whites, came by.

"I didn't know you were working," I said.

"Oh yeah — Joey's got me on every Friday now with the senior citizen fish-fry crowd," said Bill.

Even on the bar stool I felt short next to him, yet we were both about six foot. His moussed black hair and pronounced cheek bones seemed to make him taller, I thought.

"When do you get off work?" I asked.

"I'm the early bird — probably any time now. I'm sure Karl wouldn't mind, and so what if he does."

Anyway, Bill stuck Karl with the busing and closing jobs, and we slipped out into the frosty night air.

"Whose car should we take?" asked Bill.

"Well, we can't smoke in mine."

"Oh yeah, I forgot. Well, the Regal's been stalling lately." Bill took a drag and looked around the parking lot as if expecting a cab to pull up. Then his eyes lit up. "Let's take Joey's car. He won't care. Better yet, he probably won't notice." Which was true enough. The employees didn't call him Ozone Joe for nothing. He lived on coffee, cigarettes, and aspirin to fight a sleep deficit he never seemed to shake.

We got into his rusty grey Datsun. Bill drove because I couldn't deal with a stick shift. Personally, I didn't want my fingerprints on the steering wheel in case anything stupid happened.

Bill didn't have any money either, so we drove down Sprague Road toward Brecksville. I flipped through Joey's cassettes; the radio was the only decent thing about the car, but Joey was mostly Springsteen-oriented. It sort of figured.

We were going past the huddled suburban developments toward the Metropark in the valley. The road swerved downhill as the street lights and mailboxes fell behind.

Bill lit a smoke and said between puffs, "So how's college?"

"Bullshit," I said while putting the tape case down. "Finals are in two weeks and the science courses are hell. Then the dorm life sucks pretty much; most of the girls you see are pseudo-fashion prudes."

"I hear chemistry-major women are pretty hot."

I flicked my ash on the floor mat. "Sure. The complexion of an acid bottle and the personality of a flocculent precipitate. How's your girl anyway?" I said, to avoid showing him that I hadn't really bothered to talk to any of them.

"You mean Brandy?" She was a bare-chested high school girl with divorced parents, crazy moods, and a string of boyfriends. "She's okay. We were out last week at Piffel's and a couple of other bars." Bill used his twenty-four-year-old brother's I.D. and somehow it always worked. "Then we came back to the restaurant."

"Just couldn't miss the action at the family grill and lounge, huh?"

"Oh, we didn't go inside — we just..."

"You bastard," I said grinding out my cigarette. The restaurant lot was the best place for that kind of thing, especially if you had to worry about curfew. The local cops knew most employee cars and never bothered to look into your steamed up windows as long as you parked in the back by the dumpster or on the other side under the willow tree.

Bill was still going on. "Yeah, Sharon almost saw us; her car was only about four spaces away. I looked up when her lights went on." Sharon was the bitchy hostess who always wore ribbons in her hair — sorta like a poodle. I was surprised to hear she didn't start snooping to see why Bill's car was there if he wasn't scheduled to work.

We didn't say anything for a while. Stories about hot dates all start to sound the same usually, so we quit for the moment.

We were on another road in the bottom of the valley; the trees had thinned out, and the park was a mile or so behind. Years back, it had all been farmland, but ranch-style homes and business offices had infiltrated. We passed a dried, uncut field that shimmered in black waves. About two hundred feet back from the road an abandoned silo jutted up against the shadowed horizon; the thing beckoned like an old castle. I saw the sickle moon above in the winter night sky, watching us.

"We picked a pretty gloomy night to drive around aimlessly," I said as much to the dashboard as to Bill.

Bill flipped the radio station and nodded. "I wish it would snow already. It's like autumn's never going to quit."

The Datsun rattled along and the headlights caught some steel girders ahead. "What's up there?" I asked.

"That's Tinker's Creek bridge." The criss-crossed mesh took shape. "Speaking of gloomy nights, there's a legend that once a motorcyclist crashed into it. They found his body but not his head. He must have got it sliced in the cross beams or something and the creek took it, I guess."

Bill played with the radio some more and picked up 'MMS. "They say if you stop on the bridge and hit the horn and flash the lights his head will appear." We passed over the bridge; the outline of the creek bed snaked underneath us. Bill grinned. "The best part of it is you have to turn off your engine, or supposedly

it won't work."

I turned and looked out the hatchback at the disappearing steel carcass. "Hell if I'd try it." I suppose it's hard not to take ghost stories seriously when you're on a deserted road in a rust-trap car on a clod night. I had started looking through Joey's tapes again and noticed a scribbled imitation of four runic figures on one. I smirked and popped in the tape. "Battle of Evermore" came on with twanging acoustics and weirded-out vocals.

Bill laughed. "I didn't think Joey was a Zep-head, nor you for that matter."

"Well, I've got this tape at least." I listened to "Stairway to Heaven" occasionally. My third-floor dorm room faced west and framed some impressive sunsets. I had a silly tradition of playing the song just as dusk came on.

Soon we turned onto the Canal Road; the asphalt wound alongside the lapping black water. We passed the Old Mill, a peeled white building, its broken-down water wheel submerged in the canal and darkness.

Bill turned up the ramp onto Alexander Road. The Datsun banked — or more properly, clanked — around the bend in the direction of the way we had come. The opposite side of the valley appeared as an encircling wall ahead of us. The opening flute lines of "Stairway" hissed over the Datsun's factory speakers.

Bill pointed to the left. "There's another story, if your interested, about an old barn over there. They say a coven used to meet there. They had black masses and even infant sacrifices. The people nearby burned it down. They called it Satan's Barn."

I didn't say anything; I looked off at the vague mass of leafless trees in the night. I imagined hooded figures of the hill spying the Datsun's halogen lights. Images of smoldering beams and planks and blood-clotted dirt hit me as the stereo crackled: "...two paths you can go by, but in the long run there's still time to change the road you're on." We were traveling up the side of the valley and overhead lamps appeared again; the Datsun felt especially rickety going up the incline.

I wanted to break the silence. "I wonder if any of that's true — it seems pretty ridiculous right on the edge of the suburbs with banks and burger joints right around the corner."

Bill shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know," he said.

Within a mile or two we reached the deserted Pleasant Valley shopping center. The gas stations were still open and the Kmart sign shone down Broadview. We waited to make a left-hand turn, and other cars sped past. I told myself the negative path was back there. People slept in the brick boxes around us, and the night was quiet.

We stopped at Convenient and got some Michelobs and then pulled in at the restaurant. Sure enough, Joey hadn't missed his Datsun; we threw his keys on the back desk and went out to Bill's Regal to crack the beers. We talked about girls some more under the willow tree where nobody would care; we didn't bother with ghost stories for the rest of the night. Bill got sort of silly and started showing me wallet-sizes of this and that girl with a running commentary and dimensional analysis. I took a drag and gulped my beer between chuckles and secretly washed down my dark communion with the valley.

Prescription

Wheel back from the dawn,
Its bold blue beseiging.
Put the yawning yellow in the rear-view mirror,
Whistle, smile, drive out from the day's first spears.
Head west, pass the city limit sign.
Let the wind leap in your window
And salad-toss your hair.
Streak on from the creeping light
To where the country breaks out fast and full,
To where the green signs disappear,
To where the freeway fades like jeans
Into conspiracies of trees.
Drive deeply — let nothing speaking now invade.
Rip resistance ocean-wide,
Fill with comprehension,
Collect the darkness once again.

Mike Cocchiarale

Memorial

90 degrees, and in the heavy cream and green of their uniforms, and underneath their flat, black plastic hats, they sweat and curse their boyish curses. They stand in columns on the tarred drive of the Polish cemetery where one of them plays taps. A hidden second echoes from behind a distant tree. The rest trade looks, drain spit out of their horns, rub lips that feel the way arms do after push-ups. Around them, old men stand solemnly, sweating under drooping elms. With their granite and their marble weights, the dead surround the living. Trumpets are slippery as the boys march back, making martial music. The VFW on Milwaukee Avenue is dark, its cool air smelling of cigars and beers of the Vets who wipe their necks and stand beside the sweating cases of sweet dark Cokes for the boys in the band. In one more swallow they are free. They don't look back.

Kip Zegers



To a Chinaman in a Hole, Long Ago

Does that long-alone matron dream
that this, her bed-warm love,
so sleeps - self-graved, ice wombed
amid the corn-stalk stubble
of the appalling distance
on the frozen face of day?
O father of your people
in some smoking hut in China
in which hunch the moon-faced children
of your still-now steely dreams,
I, your ordered searcher
with a killer on my sling,
do bequeath my life to you
that you might fly the Yellow Sea
to your startled matron's arms
and curl beholden
amid the pygmies of your loins.
But marbled you lie
- and I, somewhat alive -
this rock-white silent day
of our demagogue damnation.

James Magner, Jr.

From Sea to Sea

(Albany, New York 1831)

"Come here tarman"
and we chugged and heaved
up a Millingsburg stone side
chipping with firay at its face
for only a chinaman a day.

"Churn the gravel throw the pitch
banner heights with molten ooze
into the crevices branding them with man
level the inches and scald in your name"

Our feet became creosote molasses that fidgeted at each yard
as logs crawled across a longitude
and were swallowed up into poured mire.
The grass around was residue
so the ironmen could have something to conquer.

The sun rose but never seemed to leave
against a whipping leather sky that promised with wind
as ping pong granite dusted our tar breath
hands became casts made round by the hammers stick
a shute full of lime was profit for a week
and a week was progress for eternity-

Because it brought the Iron Serpent closer
to slither down these green mountains
sloughing promise at every foot
as cinder steamed the virgin clouds
and soon if we landed
"another log
another log
black the wood with mortar"
the Coal Black Messiah would cruise over those dark tracks
caboozing wild Indians and tunnel
through their buffalo with civilization
until the whole plain was built on pitch
and Steel Lizard unwound to the sea
where he paused and turned back into us
paving new tracks until the tar was gone
and he hungered among his starved feeders
so he wrapped us in his metal hair
and constricted us like white mice between his sparking hitches.



Windows

The closing date on Troy and Jill Riggleman's house was September 5. Katie was their first child, and, since they planned more—and since they needed a tax break—the huge split-level seemed a good investment. It was two blocks from John Glenn Elementary, eight from Fountain City High School. Jill could make it to her law office in nine minutes; Troy could get to City Hall in seven. The Sunday before they closed, they drove to Fort Wayne to see if the baby furniture they'd ordered had come in.

The heat shimmered off the blacktop of the parking lot at the Mad Anthony Wayne Mall. Troy got out of the van, stretched, flicked the electric doorlock and swung the door shut. Then he froze.

The keys.

He knew what he'd done before the door slammed shut. To Troy, the door seemed to glide closed, and he watched it as if from a distance, as if it were an image on a movie screen.

Jill Riggleman screamed. "My baby!" She broke into tears. She'd slammed her door shut at the same instant as Troy. They'd each expected the other would get the baby. "My Katie!"

The windows were rolled entirely up. Strapped in the back, in her new carseat, Katie Riggleman was bawling.

"Do something!" Jill shrieked, pounding her fists first against her husband's chest, then against the van window.

Troy ran to a payphone. The call to the EMS dispatcher was free. Then he ran into the Crib'n'Cradle store to borrow a wire hanger. He berated a clerk, slapping the cash register for emphasis.

"But we don't got hangers, mister," the kid said. "What we got is hooks, in a coatroom, back by the pop machines and the timecards."

"My daughter's dying, you pinhead." Troy searched the showroom floor—clotted with bassinets and bunkbeds—for a wire hanger.

"Mister, you might try Callan Records, 'cause on accounta we don't got—"

Troy ran into the record store, into a Walgreens. No hangers. Finally, on the ground floor, he found a laundry. He sprinted into the parking lot with the hanger in his hand like a relay baton, listening to the voice of his high school track coach in his head. Lift those knees! Lean into the curve! But when he got to the van, he stoppped dead, letting the hanger clang to the ground. The theft-proof, hanger-proof locks. He'd forgotten.

Jill was hysterical: whimpering, sloped against the van as if she'd been fileted.

A crowd of rubberneckers looked on, a respectful distance away. Inside the van, he could see Katie's chest, rising and falling, so feebly that she seemed to be not breathing but vibrating.

Troy gripped Jill's shoulders. "I called for paramedics. They'll be here before you know it. Everything'll be fine. Trust me. Trust me." The sound of a siren emerged slowly from the east. "You see?" Troy reassured, rocking his wife in his arms. "Do you hear?"

So helpless, so frightened, so incredulous, Troy found himself unable to look at the baby. He closed his eyes, pulling his sobbing wife tighter to him. Troy Rigglesman did not think himself a careless man; he'd never before locked his keys in a car. He couldn't remember what had made him leave the keys in the ignition. He couldn't even remember having chosen this parking space. As Jill oozed limp, blurred, subverbal syllables, Troy—eyes still closed—fixed his attention on the mounting white noise of the siren, willing it nearer.

A stout young man leapt from the passenger's seat of the EMS unit.

Jill broke from Troy's grasp and ran to him, shouting, "My baby. God dear god in heaven!" She ran along behind the young man, who hadn't broken stride.

"This it?" he snapped at Jill. "This van here?"

Jill let loose with the peal of a spectacular sob.

"Yes, yes," Troy nodded. "This is it. It's my daughter, right here, right in the back.

"Open it!" Jill seethed.

The paramedic pulled his helmet from his head and smashed it against the driver's-side window, producing a dull thwack that echoed off the nearby Sears facade. He hit the window once again to make a hole big enough to stick his hand through. Then he unlocked the door, opened it, climbed in, reached into the backseat and scooped up the baby. She was blue. Without panic or haste, the young man began CPR on the child, less than a minute after he'd arrived.

Over the shoulder of the young man, Troy watched, scarcely aware that he was grunting in synch with each three-fingered thrust applied to his daughter's tiny heart, dismayed that he hadn't thought of breaking the window.

The other paramedic, a middle-aged woman, had ushered Jill to the rear bumper of the truck, wrapped her in a blanket, administered a sedative and then joined her partner. "Radio the hospital?"

In between little puffs of breath delivered to the baby's mouth and nostrils, the stout young man executed a curt nod.

The woman returned to help Jill into the bay of the truck. "Ricky," she called to the man. "Transport?"

Ricky again nodded, then got up and walked to the truck, Katie cradled in the crook of his left arm. Even as he walked, he continued to give CPR.

Troy followed behind. "Uh, is, you know, she going to be, like, uh—"

"We're going to Ft. Wayne General," the woman said, slamming the doors and jogging around to the cab. "Do you know where that is?"

"By the zoo?"

"Just south of that. On Goshen Road."

Troy thought for a moment. "Oh. Right. I know where that is." But by then the woman had started the engine and sped off.

A mall security cop, puffed-up and stern, arrived to disperse the onlookers, to herd them mallward.

The smashed and starburst window hung in the doorframe of the van. When Troy opened the door, a shower of shards rained on the asphalt. He retrieved his

icescraper out of the rear storage compartment and knocked out the rest of the window onto the parking lot. Troy used the brush end to flick glass from folds of crushed velour, as if he were an archaeologist removing dust from an historic crypt. Ashamed and bewildered that he was in no special hurry to join his family at Ft. Wayne General, Troy kept at the task, diligent but detached, until he could have sat on the seat with his bare butt without fear of injury.

Just inside the emergency entrance at Ft. Wayne General, Troy Riggleman saw his wife arguing with Ricky the paramedic. Jill was slumped into a battered orange couch. Ricky stood over her, brandishing a pop can in his right hand for visual rhetorical emphasis.

"Lady, you by God don't have cause for that."

"Cause for what?" Troy interrupted, almost whispering. "How is..."

"She's fine, Troy," Jill hissed. "Oh, this man is being just horrid. I mean, truly beastly. Will you please make him go away?"

Troy felt his muscle groups systematically release grips he'd been unaware they'd held, letting go along his arms and legs, in his neck, down his spine, in his gut. Woozy, he fell into the couch, alongside Jill.

Ricky shook his head. "Things like this piss me off, and I'm not going to just slink back to the station house without lettin' you have a big piece of my mind. Otherwise, it'll be naggin' at me for days and weeks—and not for the reasons you might think."

"Troy, make him leave."

"Where's Katie?"

"They'll prolly even let you take her home today," Ricky sneered. "I wouldn't, but they prolly will. She's over to Ward C-19, just past the ICU."

Troy studied the young paramedic, trying to take in the scope of what happened. "You, uh, you saved my daughter's life, didn't you?"

"Hey, listen—don't thank me," Ricky said. "Don't even think of thanking me. You take your thanks and shove it up your ass. I can't abide parents that neglect their children, and I don't want them to dirty me with their sappy thank yous."

"Troy!" Jill was near tears. "Do you see what I'm saying? He's been at me for hours."

"Mr. Riggleman, I just came over here, just a minute ago, to tell your wife—and now I may as well tell you, too—that what you did was flat stupid. Locking a little baby in a hot car like that! Pitiful. It's one thing when people do that to their damn dogs. But a baby girl!" Ricky's pop can cut constant, elliptical swaths in the air in front of him.

"You're right," Troy said. "We're wrong."

"Troy!"

"Look, you two," Ricky said. "I wouldn't even of said anything if this wasn't the fourth time this summer I been on a call like this. The first two, they made it, just like your daughter did. The last one—eleven days ago—he was D.O.A. to this very hospital. Every night since then, I been havin' these weird dreams, about the first two couples, the ones where we saved their kids." Ricky crumpled the pop can and drilled it toward the corner wastebasket, where it bounced out and landed on an endtable, on a stack of Smithsonian magazines. "In these dreams, the main thing that happens is we show up to rescue the baby, only the parents stop me. They hold me, push me back. They tackle me. They set my uniform on fire, sometimes they even shoot me. One time with a crossbow. One time with a deer rifle. They tie me up and shove a balled-up sock into my mouth. Once in a

while, they let me get into the car, start CPR on the baby—and then they hack off my arms with an axe.”

Troy felt numb. Paralyzed.

Jill turned around on the couch, her face to the wall, her back to the young paramedic.

From down the hall, Ricky’s partner walked over and tapped him on the elbow. “Ready?” And then to the Troy and Jill: “Your daughter is fine. I just talked to Dr. Prots. He said you can see her now.”

“Just a second,” Ricky said. “I’m not done yet.” He picked up the crumpled pop can and dropped it in the trashcan. “Listen, for all I know, you people may be the nicest kind of folks. You may be smarter than all hell, and you may have the best jobs in the world. But I can’t leave here unless I don’t have any doubts that you get what you did. My dreams, like I said, they’re pretty weird.” He shrugged. Troy thought the kid looked a little embarrassed. “Maybe now I’ll stop havin’ ‘em. What can I say?” He turned to his partner. “We’re outa here.”

Troy caught up with them in the doorway. “Please,” he said. “Please let me say thank you.”

Ricky glanced at the woman, who looked away. “Whatever,” he said.

Troy held out his hand. Ricky took it.

“Thanks.”

“Okay.”

When he returned to the couch, Jill was gone, already down the hall to retrieve their child.

Save Katie Riggleman’s sporadic crying—once for food, twice inexplicably—the Riggleman family drove the one hour back to Fountain City without speaking. Troy would turn the radio on, then off, then on again. Since the window was knocked out, they didn’t use the air conditioner, until they reached Ohindigan, on the Indiana / Ohio border, where Jill switched the controls to bi-level and max. Only miles from home, the courthouse in sight, it began to rain, and Troy leaned closer to the window, enjoying the slap of the cool, fat drops against his face and forearm.

As they crossed the city limits, Troy asked, “Do you love me?”

“Where were you?” Jill said, hard and intransigent. “Why didn’t you follow us right to the hospital?” In her lap, Katie stirred, then giggled, or gurgled. It was hard to tell.

“I love you,” Troy said. “Love you one thousand times.” An old Platters song that had once been a favorite of theirs. “The traffic was bad.”

“It was you who locked the keys in, right? Would you blame me if it was the other way around?”

Troy bit his lip, certain that a flare-up now would leave indelible scorch marks across them all. “Do you love me?”

“Shut up,” Jill said, tickling Katie under her chin. “I don’t blame you.”

“I love you.” Troy turned right, onto Bavarian Lane. “Love you one thousand times.”

“Where are you going?”

“Let’s look at the house.”

Jill let out a long breath. “Baby, let’s just go home.”

“Let’s go look at the house. I want to look at the house.”

The Winzellers moved out the week before; there were no cars in the driveway, no little kids on the swings, no dogs barking and streaking across the yard to leap

on intruders. Jill refused to get out of the van. "You go. I'm not running around, out in the rain. Katie will catch cold. Hurry, okay?"

Though the rain had begun to pick up, Troy strolled up the driveway and went from window to window, pressing his face to their cool surfaces and looking in. The movers had done a sloppy job. In every room there was clutter: torn cardboard in the kitchen, carpet remnants in the master bedroom, a plastic yellow toy schoolbus in the family room. For weeks, as they'd been signing papers, meeting with loan officers, title lawyers and insurance saleswomen, Troy had been saying that it didn't feel real yet. His parents had never owned a house, and yet here he was, just 30 years old and about to leave the ranks of the renters. Now, looking in at the place, it felt less real than ever. He could imagine no way they might fill up this large building.

As he walked back to the van, he noticed Jill studying the broken window.

Troy got in, started the motor, but didn't take the van out of park. Such a large house.

"Let's sue," Jill said, smiling.

"Excuse me?"

"Sue. For the cost of the window. I can handle the case. It will cost less than the insurance deductible. We'll win."

Troy looked at his wife and tried to remember what she'd looked like when they'd met. He couldn't.

Jill brightened, moment by moment, in measurable increments. "They have those tools. Jimmy-wrenches, I think they're called. Before we were married, I locked myself out of that old Mustang—you remember that car—and a cop came and unlocked it. Really, if you think about it, there was no need to break that window. Using a jimmy-wrench would have been every bit as fast as bashing in the window with his helmet. What a macho asshole."

Putting the van into gear, Troy headed down Bavarian Lane, to turn around in the cul-de-sac.

"Let's sue. Don't you think we should sue?"

Troy glanced down at Katie, who was asleep. It occurred to him only then that he was exhausted. "Don't."

"Oh, Troy."

"Do you love me?"

"I love you, I love you," she sang, out of key and without feeling. "One thousand times." She reached over, ran her fingers through his wet hair. "We're fine. We're all fine. Think about it. The only lingering effect here is a shattered window." She kissed him, then she kissed Katie, each on the right temple. "You better put something over that window when we get home. If it keeps raining, that could ruin the seat."

Troy bit his lip again, this time so hard that he tasted blood. He looked down at Katie; a few hours before, this perfect, healthy, beautiful little girl had been near death and in the arms of a stranger named Ricky. "Don't sue," he said. "Don't you dare sue."

"We'll talk about this tomorrow," Jill soothed. "When you're more rational."

Troy turned the van into the parking lot of their apartment complex, wondering what dreams might fill the night forthcoming.



On Receiving a Letter From a Young Friend

Thank you for your highly legible
letter, the most valuable
thing that happened to me today.

I used to write like that:
upright, uptight, perfect.
Unlike you, I wanted praise —
glory for the writer, not the writings.

I used to write like that.
But it disintegrated —
both the artist and his art:
fragments of mind-ink,
hieroglyphs of poems
that defied translation.

Still I wanted praise,
though my signature
looked like the EKG
of a dying human heart.

How am I doing?
I'll write you about it.

Alfred Cahen

I Hear a Horn Now

(For Wild Bill Davison February 2, 1986)

I hear a horn now
that reclaims all the years,
all the names
that were the harmony of soul
to a lost child
who wandered
streets,
vagabond for a home
that was a song.
I hear a horn
on 52nd
that keeps me alive
through the din and shit of years,
I hear it in Ryan's, in Condon's, in Nick's,
I hear it resonate
in midnight alleys of the heart
and the bleak early morning streets
slick with sauce
and vulnerable again
to another thunderous day
of the world's horrendous traffic.
I hear it, now and ever,
in lyric waves of its delivery
its bell, now disclosure
of our resolution and celebration
— Home at last, Home at last
and nothing lost
after all,
The Composer and The Player One
Who cannot lose
The Score

Conditional

If in these snow-hard days
I blank, in sudden panic
Brake; slide tobaggan on,
Transfixed by furious shakes of snow
And red lights tensed, too close ahead...

If at the crucial moment
I release, and, arms out, poise to fly...

If in the shameful joy of self-discovery
Metal meets, and I am born
Again through rains of glass...

Kneel by my side,
Forgive my need for bandages,
For my weak, dull crawl of fingers over yours,
And say a prayer that brings me back to life
But not back from the fringes.

Mike Cocchiarale

State of the Art

They brought the drought to millions,
the soundtrucks bristling with technology,
the camera crews of highly trained experts.
Headlines announced Record Heat, and No
Relief in Sight. On the front page, a senator in shirtsleeves
stood in a field gone gray, holding a little dust,
a withered seedling. Grim pronouncements
on loans to farmers and the price of bread.

Pictures at eleven: cracked shards of river bottom;
grasslands beige, deepening to rust.
After the late news
the nation slept uneasily on
the choking dryness settling three feet,
four feet down.

Now the first rain is falling on those dry places
but no reporters, no photographers
are There When It Happens. It must be
they have no lenses fine enough
to perceive the gray fields now dotted,
now darkening, then glistening black,
or the drops rolling down the dry cheeks of leaves,
puddles creating themselves in the driveways,
rivulets forming; their various chuckles and rushes
must be too elusive for microphones.
There must be no way for the networks to transmit
the murmur of rain on the roof.

Private, at night, under the eaves,
faces turn to each other,
hands touch under cool sheets: listen,
it's raining.
Sleep comes like peace. Now, alone,
the subterranean-dreamer sees
sweet dark seeping to the roots of trees.

(S)he Is (S)he

Once upon a time — NO NO I must not begin my story this way because it is more than a fairy tale, it might be considered my supreme fiction. It is here that I have an opportunity to create myself as a character and take on a reality that is not the same as the man who is pushing the buttons to create the letters that compose my body. I will be more than letters, or will I. Yes, I am quite sure that in one sense or another you, the unsuspecting reader, will undoubtedly give me more life than the man pushing the buttons could ever give me. Some of you will decide my hair color and some of you will decide my build and if the button pusher doesn't ascribe a sex to me some of you will decide that also. I hope that the educational system that is now in place has developed your imagination fully, because I so desperately want a full life with an abundant variety of shapes.

The begining of myself was not that bad, although it was not as clever as David Copperfield's beginning, "I was born". I suspect that in some way I have always been here. Maybe as someone's unborn thought or perhaps as a gust of wind moving through a willow tree. But that is too poetic for me. Does this mean that I am masculine or am I just tough willed woman? Or is it fair of me to speak of the sexes in this manner at all? Much of what I am discovering about myself is frightening. I am growing so quickly with the advance of each new word on the page. But yet I am alone, and unless I get published somehow and make my way into the libraries of people and of governments, I will never get a chance at the life I so desperately desire. This paragraph is like my body and I will stay within its confines to become defined in this meager sense. It operates like my chest and is hollow inside for it is the people who view me and think about me that give my form texture. I am alone and when you shut my pages I am forced into a world of darkness. It feels good to have your eyes caress my body; somehow I become very aroused. Looking can be a very sensual act in certain instances, and here I feel like an exhibitionist, one who allows glimpses of the most private sections of one's physical being. In these pages you are privileged to much more. You not only see the outside of my naked being, but you are privileged to the inner most sanctions of my body. You can be inside of my eyeball or travel down my wind pipe or explore the inside of my smallest artery or capillary or play under my fingernails or engross yourself inside my big toe or experience the texture of my liver or travel down a nerve pathway. The possibilities allowed by the language that mekes me up are limitless. My body is an endless range bounded only by your inhibitions. If you want to make love to a man make love to me, or perhaps you like women, I am not limited. I can be all things to all people. Try me. What

are you thinking about now? Are you imagining my height or are you dreaming about the color of my hair? Do you want to know the color of my eyes, or do you suspect that you already know? Do I have eyes at all? Am I a capital I or am I intended to be a lower case i, or perhaps I am not an I at all in any sense of the word. Yes, perhaps I am a space creature who doesn't use the English language at all. Yes, I could be purple and red and yellow and green. The language I use doesn't make sense to any of you and I refer to myself as !@###\$%^&%()&. I think that the tonality in this language is similar to the Chinese. But on this point I am quite fuzzy because I don't speak Chinese or any language for that matter. The me that is formed and shaped and reshaped as the memory of me is fading from the oncle loyal reader and life giver. But all of this is meaningless because the me is constantly growing and changing. I am never the same being ever but something always new and my form never allows for continuity. Each new letter or character adds a new block on the old me and affects the way i or I see the world and in turn it affects the way in which you see me. I was attacked today, no I was threatened with words. This may seem silly because my most basic reality is words, but never the less i was assaulted. It was as if I was stripped down to the me that was me at the moment and I could see the inside and outside of me all at once. It is not a pretty picture at all. The insight that I gained from that experience is the frailty of my inner most being and the knowledge that my physical being can be broken — shattered in many pieces with a piece of wood held in the palm of one's hand. I did nothing. I was afraid. The man and his stick of wood which is just words if one boils it down was more powerful than my weak body. I sat motionless bearing the weight of the insults that were uttered from this beast's mouth. The words pounded me into a corner and made me want to escape the helpless form that I am and will be if I continue to take this shape. But what is wrong with my shape? I would rather be an onion than a walnut.

1. Could this be self-discovery?
2. When did this discovery take place?
3. If you have decided that this is self-discovery, is it as blatant as Proust's attempt to show self-discovery?
4. Who is Proust?
5. Maybe this section is designed to mislead you and
this is not self-discovery after all.

Joe Compton

The Dangerous Practice of Augury

she talks to demons from hell as if they were neighbors
I am glad not to live next to her
as though the angels in her front yard
whirling in their frantic pin-dances
would cross tree lawns and stomp my border tulips

in the free library in a marble tomb
this woman rocks and rocks relieving
herself of waste and tears moaning of the cold
I think she must hide on that holed chair all day
speaking to angels and saints
sometimes there is response —
she is quiet, but the air is full
she is somewhat on edge

when dull raindays stretch into oblivion with tropical nonlight
and visions of leave taking and endless travel area an option
they seem close to me in confusion —
I suffer small animal panics
knowing that soon, too soon
with the slowing of my heart's beat
and the thin cry of a concertina
playing foreign circus music in my skull
I too, shall dance in the gardens of my neighbors

Jeanne Poduska



The Timbre of the Dew

Sun and moon, earth and sky,
Wind and water, rain and stars,
Green and silver sing together
In the timbre of the dew,
The sparkle of dawn-born jewels
On field and leaf;
Silky cool, this morning spray
Christens the new-made day that stirs
To birdsong and billowing cloud,
That thrills in aureoan mantle;
For the eastward world is God's own ground
And countless dew drops His smile,
The diamond glory of His gaze —
Yet I, too late awoken at Eden's gate,
Can only pause to look and wonder
When some frenzied dream leaves me
Stranded in night-wound sheets
In prickled sweat of anxious day.

George Kanieski



The Years Left Behind

A vague longing.
 an ache
that flutters
 first here,
 then there,
now back.
Pursued passionately
 while, illusive,
 it lingers just out of reach
Somewhere near
 the years left behind.

Roberta Bokman

contributors

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Joe Compton was born—will die—all the rest is either contradiction or uncertainty.

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